through the local employment exchanges. Recruitment from other sources is done only in the event of non-availability of suitable persons from the local employment exchanges.

**Emploration of Diamonds**

3617. SHRI GAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Madhya Pradesh State Government have decided to hand-over the diamond deposits in Behradih Block in Raipur district to a Mumbai based B. Vijaykumar Dimond Consortium for exploration and exploitation of diamonds;

(b) if so, whether prior permission from Central Government was taken before taking this decision by the State Government; and

(c) if not, the details and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) to (c) As per information furnished by the State Govt. of Madhya Pradesh, offer were invited by Madhya Pradesh State Mining Corporation on behalf of the Madhya Pradesh Govt. from Indian citizens and Companies registered in India for prospecting, mining and marketing of diamonds available in 11 Blocks, of the state viz Angora block, Majhgaon block, Paharikhera block, IB-Maini block, Sarangarh block, Pithora block, Behradih block, Kanker Keshkal block, Narainpur Lanjora block, Chhota Dongar block and Tokapal block, each block covering an area of around 4500 to 5000 Sq. Kms. The following four companies submitted their offers:—

1. M/s. National Mineral Development Corporation Ltd. Hyderabad [For (1) Pithora Block (2) Kanker-Keshkal Block (3) Chhota Dongar Block (4) Tokapal Block (5) Narainpur-Lanjora Block, & (6) Behradih Block].

2. M/s. Adamas India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi (For Behradih Block only)

3. M/s. ACC-Rio Tinto Exploration Corp. Ltd. Bangalore (For Behradih Block only)

4. M/s. B. Vijaykumar Diamond Consortium, Mumbai, (For Behradih Block only)

The aforesaid four offers were evaluated by M/s. ICICI. Keeping in view the technical evaluation made by I.C.I.C.I., the Govt. of Madhya Pradesh has decided to accept the offer made by M/s. B. Vijaykumar Diamond Consortium for Behradih Block.

Further, the State Govt. of Madhya Pradesh has decided that the selected company shall form a Joint Sector Company in conjunction with Madhya Pradesh State Mining Corporation within a fixed time frame.

After the Joint Sector Company is registered, Govt. of Madhya Pradesh shall recommend the application for grant of prospecting licence for prior approval of the Central Govt. as per the provisions of Section 5(1) of the Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957.

Since the Central Govt. has not received any proposal from the Govt. of Madhya Pradesh as yet for grant of prospecting licence for diamonds to M/s. B. Vijaykumar Diamond Consortium, Mumbai, the question regarding permission does not arise.

**Gold/Diamond Mines in Raipur District of Madhya Pradesh**

3618. SHRI GOVINDRAM MIRI: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have found any Gold/Diamond mines in Devbhog/ Raipur district of Madhya Pradesh recently.

(b) if so, whether Government have received any report to explore the possibilities;